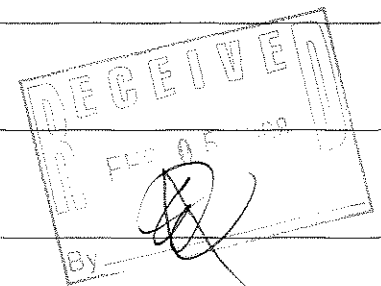
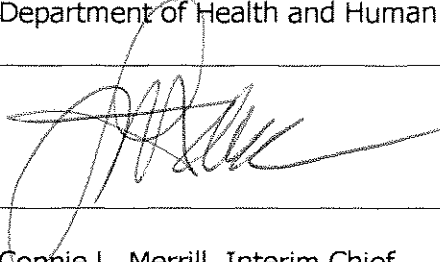



California's Child and Family Services Review
County Self Improvement Plan

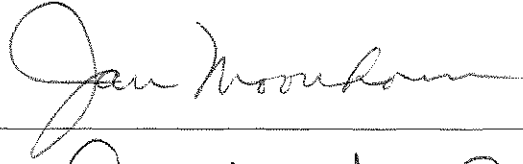
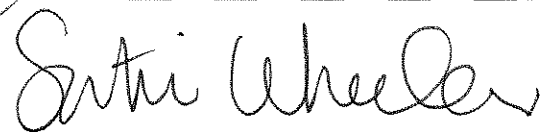
County	Del Norte
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency	Department of Health and Human Services Social Services Branch
Period of Self Improvement Plan	2008 to 2010
Period of Outcomes Data	October 2004 through October 2007
Date Submitted	January 23, 2008
County Contact Person for County Self-Assessment	
Name	Crystal Markytan
Title	Program Manager – Social Services Branch
Address	880 Northcrest Drive, Crescent City, CA 95531
Phone	(707) 464-3191, extension 297
Email	markyc@cws.state.ca.us



Submitted for Each Agency for the Children Under Its Care

Name	Gary R. Blatnick, Director Department of Health and Human Services
Signature	
Name	Connie L. Merrill, Interim Chief Probation Department
Signature	

In Collaboration With

Jan Moorehouse, Superintendent Del Norte Unified School District	
Sutie Wheeler, District Manager CDSS Adoption Branch	

System Improvement Plan, Del Norte County Health and Human Services - Child Welfare Services – Del Norte County
Probation 2007-2009

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

S1.1 NO RECURRENCE OF MALTREATMENT: This safety measure reflects the percentage of children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated child maltreatment allegation within the first 6 months of a specified time period for whom there was no additional substantiated maltreatment allegation during the subsequent 6 months. The denominator is the total number of children with a substantiated allegation during the first 6 months of the period; the numerator is the count of these children who had no other substantiated allegation in the following 6 months.

County's Current Performance:

Review of the Data: Of all the children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation during the first six months of the current study period, what percent were not victims of another substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation within the six months following that maltreatment incident?

National Goal or Standard
94.6%

Del Norte County Baseline/Oct. 2004
84.6%

Del Norte County/Oct. 2007
83.1%

Improvement Goal 1.0

Increase the effectiveness of efforts to protect children from abuse and neglect as measured by a 10% improvement in Federal Indicator S1.1 – No Recurrence of Maltreatment by October of 2010.

Strategy 1. 1

Continue to apply Structured Decision Making Safety, Risk and Strengths and Needs Assessment Tools to all referrals and cases

Strategy Rationale¹

Intake is standardized and can be completed by all workers using the same criteria. Immediate harm and future risk can be assessed based on a consistent and agreed upon set of definitions. Regular use of the tools will promote the most efficient use of limited resources. Families with the highest level of need will receive services.

Milestone	1.1.1 Continue to apply Structured Decision Making Tools to all referrals and cases	Timefram	Ongoing	Assigned to	Susan Wilson – SDM Coordinator Crystal Markytan – Program Manager
	1.1.2 Monitor areas of the child welfare system where Structured Decision Making is not being		Once every three months during fiscal year 2008-2009		

¹ Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome area.

	applied based on reports from Children’s Research Center and data from Safe Measures. Give feedback to supervisors and staff in areas where compliance with goal is not being met				
Strategy 1. 2 Retain CalWORKs-Child Welfare Services Partnership (Linkages)			Strategy Rationale Linkages is a promising practice which has been in place in Del Norte County for the past seven years. It recognizes that poverty is a significant risk factor for child abuse and neglect and supports the coordinated assessment, case planning, and service delivery in Child Welfare Services and CalWORKs.		
Milestone	1.2.1. Continue to refer all eligible Family Maintenance cases to Linkages.	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Linkages Coordinator - Vacant Susan Wilson – Voluntary Family Maintenance Supervisor Julie Cain – Court Ordered Family Maintenance Supervisor
	1.2.2 Monitor areas of the Linkages program where the referrals are not being made or the program is not being applied and give feedback to supervisors or staff on how to improve program effectiveness.		Monthly at Linkages workgroup meetings		
Strategy 1. 3 Increase the Emergency Response and Voluntary Family Maintenance caseload capacity			Strategy Rationale The Emergency Response/Family Maintenance Unit should have four Master’s level social workers with a total of seven full time social workers. Over the period of the last System Improvement Plan, this unit did not achieve full staffing due to the inability to recruit and retain social workers. Emergency Response and Family Maintenance services are evidence-informed activities designed to assess child safety and provide in-home protective services to prevent or remediate abuse and neglect. Voluntary Family Maintenance emphasizes engaging families in the change process rather than substantiating allegations. Both are pre-placement preventative services and sustained full staffing would predict that a lower incidence of reoccurrence would take place.		
Mi	1.3.1 Recruit and retain two masters level social workers for Family Maintenance Services	Ti	January 1, 2008	Ass	Crystal Markytan – Program Manager, Social Services Branch

					Susan Wilson – Intake and Voluntary Family Maintenance Supervisor
	1.3.2 Recruit and retain two masters level social workers for Emergency Response Services		January 1, 2008		
	1.3.3 Train the Emergency Response and Family Maintenance social workers		February 1, 2008		
Strategy 1. 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Differential Response - Life Elevation Action Program (LEAP)Differential Response - Public Health Nursing-Home Visiting Program			Strategy Rationale Maintaining a differential Child Welfare Services Intake structure that includes contracting with community based service providers insures that a larger proportion of referrals will receive change oriented services at an earlier point in the intervention process.		
Milestone	1.4.1 Maintain contract with Community Assistance Network for Life Elevation Action Program (LEAP) services.	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Crystal Markytan – Program Manager Susan Wilson – Intake Supervisor
	1.4.2 Offer all eligible families community based services when they do not meet the criteria for a Child Welfare Response		Ongoing		
Strategy 1. 5 Team Decision Making			Strategy Rationale Evidenced Based strategy used to reduce the number of placements, placement changes and increase child safety by including family and committed team members in placement decisions every time a placement decision is made. The strategy includes the use of an in-house trained facilitator.		
Milestone	1.5.1 Train staff, community partners and other interested parties on principles of Team Decision Making	Timeframe	2009 - Contingent upon staffing and resources	Assigned to	Crystal Markytan – Program Manager Susan Wilson – Intake Supervisor Julie Cain – Ongoing Supervisor
	1.5.2 Implement Team Decision Making – Emergency Response and Family Maintenance		2009 – Contingent upon staffing and resources		
	1.5.3 Implement Team Decision Making – Family Reunification and Permanency Planning		2009 – Contingent upon staffing and resources		

--	--	--	--	--

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

The success of all improvement plan goals is subject to the counties ability to recruit and retain capable staff. Over the period of the last System Improvement Plan the Department has experienced significant staff turnover. Since April of 2004 there have been 21 social worker and social worker supervisor positions vacated and 48 recruitments for those same positions. The cost to the county can be considered in two ways. First in terms of compromised Child Welfare outcomes and the real impact that means to the families we serve and secondly the cost to the community as we engage in a perpetual cycle of training while we loose our academic, institutional and applied resources to surrounding communities. The efficacy of the programs implemented by Child Welfare Services will never truly be known until we can maintain optimal staffing for a sustained period of time. Research has shown that outcomes for children are exponentially improved by having the same social worker over time. The same is true for the family, as the relationship is established and the focus toward the case plan goals can be consistent and clear.

Staffing remains the number one barrier to effective services in Child Welfare Services. In order to address this problem which includes; local factors such as amongst the lowest paying social worker wage in the state, geographic isolation, and those factors endemic to the profession such as dangerous/hostile situations encountered during the course of the day, secondary post traumatic stress and a broad spectrum of requirements of the worker in order to perform the job, a workgroup should be formed to implement recruitment and retention strategies. Such workgroups have been implemented in other counties with less workforce instability. Del Norte County would do well to consider stabilizing the present workforce and putting measures into place that will attract workers of the future. The County is in the process of considering the problem of low wages for professional level social workers and the possibility of making an effort to increase their salaries commensurate with similar level professionals. This will not include social workers who do not meet the academic standards for professional status despite having considerable experience and application/skills based training and performing the same day to day duties in child welfare.

The relatively small numbers reported throughout these reports lend themselves to volatility and difficulty in interpretation when viewed on a strictly data level or in their composite form. Since the implementation of tools such as Safe Measures, social workers and their supervisors can “drill down” to see the specific cases, or “program participation” rates can be viewed on the UC Berkeley website reporting California Children and Family Services Review quarterly outcomes, to better understand the underlying data.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

Child Welfare Services contracts with the Northern California Training Academy through the University of California at Davis for all staff including; legal clerks, vocational assistants, social services aides and social workers, to attend Standardized Core Training for Child Welfare Social Workers. The training takes place over five months in five three day modules that cover: 1) Framework: Child Development, 2) Child Maltreatment Identification, 3) Structured Decision Making, 4) Case Planning and Visitation and 5) Placement and Permanency and Teaming and Partnerships. A Secondary Core Training or Phase II is also required within the first 24 months of hire and includes advanced curriculum. Staff must obtain training in Redding or Davis so two travel days are required to attend each module.

The Department will continue its contract with Children’s Research Center (CRC) in order to receive technical assistance and support for Structured Decision Making and Safe Measures. CRC makes a consultant available twice yearly to read SDM tools for accuracy and consistency with the case documentation. Over the course of this improvement cycle current staff will learn to use the Safe Measures tool which allows each social worker to see precisely what is overdue or missing on their respective case load. Safe Measures training must keep up with staff turnover to be an effective case management tool.

Del Norte County Linkages is currently receiving and giving technical support through the Child and Family Policy Institute of California. As a pioneer Linkages county Del Norte County has been asked to sit on panels at Linkages convening's and serve as a mentor to counties who are beginning their Linkages programs.

Technical assistance and support for Team Decision Making will be obtained through the Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice at the University of California at Davis. The Resource Center will be contracting the specialized training which is not planned until next year. Team Decision Making will not be implemented until full and sustained staffing of the core service can be achieved.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

CalWORKs staff will continue to partner with Child Welfare to find new and innovative ways to provide Linkages services to families with coordinated case plans.

Community partners will be identified (with technical assistance) as potential participants in Team Decision Making meetings and invited to training so that they will be involved from the beginning of the program.

The Community Assistance Network (CAN) has been a strong Child Welfare partner in meeting the needs of the families that are served through Differential Response – LEAP. Their continued collaborative support is essential to the success of Differential Response.

The Public Health Home Nursing – Home Visiting Program through the Public Health Branch of the Department of Health and Human Services has been a long term Child Welfare Partner. Their continued collaboration as a Differential Response service provider is an essential component of the program's continued success.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

- Higher salaries need to be offered to offset the geographic isolation of the county in order to attract social workers to Del Norte County. Del Norte County social worker salaries do not compare to those of similar level professionals within the county or with that of social workers in surrounding counties. Del Norte County has extreme difficulties recruiting and retaining social workers and/or social work supervisors in order to provide essential core services. Attempts to improve the child welfare system often yield mixed results as improvement efforts cannot be sustained when staffing levels drop. Efforts by child welfare supervisors are diverted by the perpetual training of inexperienced staff in the core services. As a consequence unit supervisors do not have the ability to focus on system review and new improvement strategies are not properly or are unevenly implemented.
- Del Norte County will continue to work with Merit Systems Services examining promising practices and enhanced strategies for the recruitment and retention of social workers.
- Fiscal incentives should be offered to counties that have coordinated Child Welfare Services and CalWORKs activities (including joint assessment and unified case plans).
- Increase the Emergency Response and Voluntary Family Maintenance caseload capacity. The recommendations within the SB 2030

workload study done in 1999-2000 should be fully implemented with additional updating to accommodate relevant legislation passed since 2000. Caseload capacities are currently out of date with the requirements of today's practice.

- The basic cost of doing business has risen yearly; the state has not funded budget adjustments for Child Welfare programs since 2001. Child Welfare Services funding has been eroded by over 20% as a result.
- Regular funding should be made available to support the Differential Response Programs in local communities.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

C1.3: Reunification Within 12 Months (Entry Cohort): This measure computes the percentage of children reunified within 12 months of removal for a cohort of children first entering foster care. The entry cohort is comprised of children entering foster care for the first time during a 6-month period. This measure contributes to the first permanency composite.

The 12 month cutoff to reunification is based on the latest date of removal from the home with children in care for less than 8 days excluded. Children with a current placement of "trial home visit" are included in the count of children reunified in less than 12 months if that visit lasted at least 30 days, its start-date fell within 11 months of the latest removal date, and it was the final placement before the child was discharged from foster care to reunification.

The denominator is the total number of children in the 6-month entry cohort; the numerator is the count of children in the cohort who were reunified within 12 months of removal.

County's Current Performance:

Review of the Data: Of all children entering foster care for the first time and staying at least eight days, what percentage were reunified within twelve months?

National Goal or Standard
48.4%

Del Norte County Baseline/Oct. 2004
19.2%

Del Norte County/Oct. 2007
25.0%

Improvement Goal 2.0

Increase the effectiveness of efforts to reunify children safely to their own homes within twelve months of the date of removal as measured by a 20% improvement in Federal Measure C1.3: Reunification Within 12 Months (Entry Cohort) by October 2010.

Strategy 2.1

Case Transfer Protocol

Strategy Rationale

Protocol will formalize the process of promoting a referral to a case which includes completing; all necessary case management activities, data collection fields and pertinent documentation and the introduction to clients and out of home caregivers. The implementation of a protocol will ensure that information is transferred most efficiently and that

			families receive the best services possible.		
Milestone	2.1.1 Create a workgroup to develop the protocol – include members of the intake unit and the ongoing unit	Timeframe	March, 2008	Assigned to	Julie Cain – Ongoing Supervisor Susan Wilson – Intake Supervisor
	2.1.2 Provide staff training and implement the Case Transfer Protocol		May, 2008		
Strategy 2.2 Refer all children to Remi Vista Inc., a mental health Medi-Cal organizational provider, for mental health assessment and on-going services as needed.			Strategy Rationale Early mental health assessment will identify problem areas and allow for targeted treatment of children and their families or caregivers.		
Milestone	2.2.1 Continue to refer all children to Remi Vista Inc. for a mental health assessment within 30 days of the Detention Hearing. This should occur when the court has ordered the child detained and if the child is not already an established mental health client or a client of alternative counseling services.	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Julie Cain - Court Services Supervisor
	2.2.2 Monitor that referrals are being made timely and that assessments are being scheduled by the service provider.		Ongoing		
Strategy 2. 3 Refer families who meet the criteria to Safe and Drug Free Families and Communities (SDFFC) Program			Strategy Rationale Evidence based program for families with children ages 10 -14 who have problems with substance use and/or abuse, child behavior problems, dysfunctional family interactions and poor parenting skills. The program is interactive and involves both the parents and the youth. Weekly in class participation and out of class assignments assist to break the cycle of generational family dysfunction.		
	2.3.1 Using the SDM Strengths and Needs Assessment Tool determine if the family is a good candidate for SDFFC Program.		Within 30 days of opening a referral	Assigned to	Susan Wilson – Intake Supervisor Julie Cain – Ongoing Supervisor
	2.3.2 SDFFC becomes part of the client’s written case plan. Client engages in next available session offered.		Within 30 days of opening a referral the case plan is developed and referral to SDFFC is made. Client		

			engages in services at next available opening.		
	2.3.3 Protocol developed for referral to CAN - SDDFC Program		April 5, 2008		
Strategy 2.4 Apply the Structured Decision Making “Reunification Reassessment” Tool to all Family Reunification cases with specified periodicity. Follow the reunification recommendations unless documentation shows well established rationale for deviation.			Strategy Rationale Application of Structured Decision Making Safety, Risk and Strength and Needs Assessment Tools to all referrals and cases consistently and correctly under direction of unit supervisors and with technical assistance from Children’s Research Center provides for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highly structured assessments of child safety, family risk and strength and needs as recommended in the California Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan,• A system of case review and reassessment to supplement, as required by California Department of Social Service Child Welfare Services regulations, and• A comprehensive information system that provides data for program monitoring, planning, and evaluation		
	2.4.1 Document outcome of SDM “Reunification Reassessment” Tool in all dependency case plan updates. Make specific reference to the visitation quality and compliance.		January, 2008	Assigned to	Julie Cain – Ongoing Supervisor
	2.4.2 Check Safe Measures for compliance of Family Reunification social workers. Give social workers monthly feedback.		January, 2008		
	2.4.3 Meet with CRC consultant Rod Caskey twice yearly to discuss worker progress		January, 2008		
Strategy 2.5 Retain and strengthen CalWORKs-Child Welfare Services Partnership – Linkages/AB-429 coordinated case planning.			Strategy Rationale Linkages/AB-429 is a promising practice which has been in place in Del Norte county for the past seven years. It recognizes that poverty is a significant risk factor for child abuse and neglect and supports the		

			coordinated assessment, case planning, and service delivery in Child Welfare Services and CalWORKs.		
Milestone	2.5.1 Refer all eligible families for AB-429 services – Document in the case record.	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Julie Cain – Ongoing Supervisor Linkages Coordinator - Vacant
	2.5.2 Record AB429 status under the Linkages Special Projects Coding System		Ongoing		
Strategy 2.6 In each case where the case plan goal is Family Reunification provide a concurrent plan and; document monthly contacts with the parents about the status of the case plan and the concurrent plan.			Strategy Rationale Permanency alternate goal planning and case management activities to support that goal are required by California Department of Social Service Manual of Policies and Procedure section 31-201.12 Parents will be fully informed of all concurrent goal planning and their input will be sought in determining what that plan should be.		
Milestone	2.6.1 Include a concurrent case plan goal in each initial and updated Family Reunification case plan	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Julie Cain – Ongoing Supervisor Crystal Markytan – Program Manager
	2.6.2 Regular training on concurrent case planning including once yearly training with California State Adoptions		Ongoing		
Strategy 2.7 Implement Family Search and Engagement techniques to find more relative resources for children earlier in the dependency process.			Strategy Rationale This evidence based strategy is employed at the “front end” of the system to aide the social worker in asking the question of who the child may have available as placement a resource in a broader way than has been done in the past. This begins the expanded effort for concurrent planning. Search techniques learned will enable the social worker/probation officer to contact a larger pool of resources for a specific child. Engagement techniques assist the social worker/probation officer to first establish then maintain a long term committed relationship between the child and the resource. Additionally, this strategy can be used in the “back end” of a case to help find permanent homes for youth who have been in long term foster care placements for lack of a better permanent plan.		
	2.7.1 Contract with Northern California Training Academy at the University of California at Davis		January, 2008		Crystal Markytan – Program Manager

	– Center for Family Focused Practice for training and technical support		April, 2008	Eileen Myster – Probation Supervisor
	Train Child Welfare and Probation staff and interested community partners			
	2.7.2 Develop protocols and procedures for Family Search and Engagement Techniques			
	2.7.3 Develop protocols and procedures for Family Search and Engagement Techniques		April, 2008	

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

Child Welfare Service will continue to monitor the referral and tracking system implemented in August of 2007 designed to insure that all CWS referrals made to Remi Vista Inc. were made and assigned in a timely manner. The tracking system also enables the social workers to determine if the clients are making their scheduled appointments.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

Northern California Training Academy and the University of California at Davis will work with Child Welfare Services to bring training for Family Search and Engagement Techniques to Del Norte County. They will provide ongoing support through program implementation.

Children's Research Center provides ongoing support and technical assistance for both Structured Decisions Making and Safe Measures.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

Community Assistance Network was awarded the Safe and Drug Free Families and Communities Program Grant in December of 2007. Upon staffing and implementation of this important new program, Child Welfare Services will collaborate with CAN in developing a referral protocol.

California State Adoptions – Arcata Branch will continue its collaborative relationship with Del Norte County Child Welfare Services. They provide regular training on concurrent planning.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

Mental health funding for adult services needs to be expanded at the State and Federal level. Legislative restrictions currently limit adults who do not have private insurance and ability to pay to Mental Health intake assessment and services based on medical necessity. For many of the adults in the Child Welfare population who are on public assistance this means that they will be considered for the following based on eligibility; group treatment, case management, and medication review. They can be integrated into their child's treatment as part of the case at Remi Vista Inc., but this is not as the primary client. To support reunification efforts and to prevent the reentry into foster care, adults should have access to

a fully licensed and experienced clinician.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

C1.4 Permanency of reunification: This measure computes the percentage of children reentering foster care within 12 months of a reunification discharge. The denominator is the total number of children who exited foster care to reunification in a 12 month period; the numerator is the count of these reunified children who then reentered care within 365 days of the reunification discharge date. This measure contributes to the first permanency composite.

County's Current Performance:

Review of the Data: Of all children who were discharged from foster care to reunification in the current 12-month study period, what percent re-entered foster care in less than 12 months from the date of discharge?

National Goal or Standard
9.9%

Del Norte County Baseline/Oct. 2004
22.1%

Del Norte County/Oct. 2007
29.6%

Improvement Goal 3.0

Reduce the number of children by 20% who re-enter foster care subsequent to reunification or guardianship by January 2010.

Strategy 3.1

Commitment to Differential Response intake structure:

Pathway 1: when referral does not meet the criteria for Child Welfare response

- Life Elevation Action Program (LEAP) and
- Public Health Nursing Home Visiting Program

Pathway 2: Child Welfare assessment and joint community based response with an offer of community based services

- Life Elevation Action Program (LEAP) and
- Public Health Nursing Home Visiting Program

Strategy Rationale

Give families with previous child welfare history the opportunity to work with community based partners to bring about stability in their homes through a non-adversarial process.

	3.1.1 Assess referrals using a Differential Response model at intake.		Ongoing since September of 2005	Assigned to	Susan Wilson – Intake Supervisor
	3.1.2 Offer all families that meet Pathway 1 criteria community based service option		January, 2008		
	3.1.3 Make joint assessment with all referrals that meet Pathway 2 criteria – offer families community based services		January, 2008		
Strategy 3. 2 Fully staff the Voluntary Family Maintenance Program with three full time social workers.			Strategy Rationale Family Maintenance Services is an evidence informed activity designed to provide in-home protective services to prevent or remediate abuse and neglect. Voluntary Family Maintenance emphasizes engaging families in the change process rather than substantiating allegations. Families with previous child welfare history can to stabilize given the support of voluntary services with the children remaining in the home. This is a pre-placement prevention activity.		
Milestone	3.2.1 Recruit and retain two Social Worker IIIs or above for the position of Family Maintenance Social Worker.	Timeframe	January, 2008	Assigned to	Crystal Markytan – Program Manager, Social Services Branch
Strategy 3.3 Apply the Structured Decision Making “Family Strengths and Needs Assessment” and “Reunification Reassessment” Tools to all Family Reunification cases			Strategy Rationale Application of Structured Decision Making “Family Strength and Needs Assessment” and “Reunification Reassessment” tools to all Family Reunification cases consistently and correctly under direction of unit supervisors and with technical assistance from Children’s Research Center provides for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highly structured assessment of the families strengths and needs, helps to determine the level of service and “drives” the case plan,• A tool to aide in the consideration of returning the child home from foster care. It systematically reassesses risk, safety, compliance with the case plan, and visitation quality and compliance.		

	3.3.1 Use the Structured Decision Making “Family Strengths and Needs Assessment” for the basis of all initial and updated case plan documents.		January, 2008		Susan Wilson – Intake Supervisor Julie Cain – Ongoing Supervisor
	3.3.2 Use the Structured Decision Making “Reunification Reassessment” tool to reassess Family Reunification cases at the time of Dependency Status Review Hearings		January, 2008		
	3.3.3 Use Safe Measures to monitor social worker compliance with use of the Structured Decision Making tools		January, 2008		
Strategy 3.4 Review and refine protocol for parent-child visitation implementing best practice standards.			Strategy Rationale Research indicates that quality parent-child visitation is the most highly correlated component to successful reunification.		
	3.4.1 Convene workgroup to review best practice standards for parent-child visitation congruent with successful reunification		February, 2008	Assigned to	Julie Cain – Ongoing Supervisor Crystal Markytan – Program Manager, Social Services Branch
	3.4.2 Workgroup to review existing protocol and practices for parent-child visitation		April, 2008		
	3.4.3 Workgroup move forward with modifications to protocol so that it is consistent with the objective of using best practices towards achieving successful reunification through parent-child visitation		July, 2008		

Strategy 3.5 Expand Linkages: CalWORKs and Child Welfare Collaboration to Improve Outcomes for those families who have formally exited the “system”.		Strategy Rationale By providing one additional year of step down, “after care” services families can stabilize by consolidating the gains they made in treatment programs and supportive services while not having to shoulder the burdens of day to day living without any form of support. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistent with the goal of the 2007-8 Linkages Plan• Assists families as they becomes less dependent on agency interaction• Provides for in-person, bi-monthly non-adversarial monitoring			
Milestone	3.5.1 Convene workgroup to develop a protocol to expand services to the aftercare population	Timeframe	July, 2008	Assigned to	Linkages Coordinator- Vacant Julie Cain - Ongoing Supervisor
	3.5.2 Begin service delivery to aftercare population		December, 2009		
Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals. The Linkages Coordinator position is vacant. The Social Services Program Manager and the Public Assistance Program Manager will develop a plan to support the goal of both the Linkages and Child Welfare System Improvement Plan to serve the after-care population.					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Ongoing training for all ancillary tools including Structured Decision Making, Safe Measures and all referral protocols necessary in order to maintain optimal services to children and families during staff transition.					
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. CalWORKs staff is an essential partner in serving the joint Linkages population. Child Welfare Services will work collaboratively with the Public Assistance Branch to develop a protocol to serve the aftercare population. The Community Assistance Network and the Public Health Nurses are essential partners in Differential Response.					
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None at this time.					

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

C2.4 Permanency of children in foster care: Legally freed within 6 months. This measure computes the percentage of children who were in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer and not legally free for adoption within the next 6 months. The denominator consists of all children in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer who, on the first day of the period, were not yet legally free; the numerator included those children who were then declared legally free within the next 6 months (including the first and last days of the 6 month interval). This measure contributes to the second permanency composite.

A child is considered to be legally free for adoption if there is a parental rights termination date recorded for all parents with legal standing. If a parent is deceased, the date of death is reported as the parental rights termination date.

Children in care for 17 continuous months or longer on the first day of the period who are then declared legally free at some point between that first day or the last day of the 6 month period are counted in the numerator (i.e., legally free within 6 months). Also included in the numerator are any children declared legally free and then discharged during the 6 month interval.

Excluded in the measure (i.e., not counted in either the numerator or the denominator) are those children who were in care for 17 continuous months or longer, but who did not become legally free for adoption, instead exiting foster care during the next 6 months with a placement episode termination reason of reunification with parents or primary caretakers, or discharge to guardianship.

County's Current Performance:

Review of the Data: Of all of the children in foster care continuously for 17 months what percentage became legally freed for adoption within the subsequent six month period?

National Goal or Standard
10.9%

Del Norte County Baseline/Oct. 2004
26.5%

Del Norte County/Oct. 2007
5.9%

Improvement Goal 4.0

Of children in foster care continuously for 17 months, increase the percentage that becomes legally freed for adoption within the subsequent six month period by 5% by January of 2010.

Strategy 4.1

Monthly case staffing between California State Adoptions case workers and Ongoing Unit Supervisor to determine the status of current adoptions referrals.

Strategy Rationale

All referrals made to State Adoptions for concurrent planning should be made by Disposition. Regular staffing will serve to insure that initial referrals are being made. It will also function as a forum for noticing the Department when there is missing information in the Adoptions file. And any impediment to achieving permanence within the subsequent six month period.

Milestone	4.1.1 Set a day and week of the month for a regularly scheduled meeting to occur.	Timeframe	February, 2008	Assigned to	Julie Cain, Ongoing Supervisor Tedee Boyland, Senior Adoptions Specialist, California State Adoptions
	Strategy 4.2 Use Safe Measures to find which cases historically have not been freed for adoption within the six months subsequent to 17 months in foster care.		Strategy Rationale Determine if there is a pattern in the cases where children have not been freed for adoption within the six month period following 17 months of foster care. If so, what pattern emerged, and how can it be addressed in terms of case management?		
	4.2.1 Using Safe Measures, go back to previous quarters to see what cases did not meet the standard of having been legally freed for adoption after 17 months in care during the subsequent 6 months.		August, 2008		Social Services Analyst
	4.2.2 Determine if there is a pattern in the cases that fit the criteria.		September, 2008		Social Services Analyst
	4.2.3 Develop a case management plan to improve the outcome and a method of tracking the improvement effort.		October, 2008		Social Services Analyst Crystal Markytan, Program Manager Julie Cain, Ongoing Supervisor
Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals. Best practice is when families are fully informed about permanency at the beginning of the case planning process. The social worker and the family will have conversations about the “dual track” system so that the family can fully participate in developing the concurrent plan for their child. There will be training on one way of how to accomplish this by using techniques of “Family Search and Engagement” within the next year.					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Annual training on concurrent planning will be put in place. Social Worker turnover is high so some of the present staff has not had the benefit of training on making good and timely adoptions referrals. We have plans for a training with State Adoptions within the next month and will plan for regularly occurring training thereafter.					
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. California State Adoptions – Arcata Branch is instrumental in providing permanency for all children in Del Norte County with a long term plan of adoption. They conduct the initial assessment, make the recommendation and should the plan be one of adoption, carry it forward.					
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.					

None at this time.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

C3.2 Permanency of children in foster care: This permanency measure computes the percentage of legally free children who were discharged to a permanent home prior to turning 18. The denominator consists of all children discharged from foster care during the year who were legally free for adoption at the time of discharge; the numerator includes those children who have a discharge date that is prior to their 18th birthday and a discharge reason coded as reunification with parents or primary caretakers, discharge to guardianship, or discharge to adoption. This measure contributes to the third permanency composite.

County's Current Performance:

Review of the Data: Of all children who were discharged from foster care in the current study period who were legally freed to a permanent home, what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday?

National Goal or Standard
98.0%

Del Norte County Baseline/Oct. 2004
100.00%

Del Norte County/Oct. 2007
90.9%

Improvement Goal 5.0

Increase efforts by 10% to discharge children from foster care who are legally free to a permanent home before their 18th birthday.

Strategy 5.1 Increase Wraparound caseload capacity by fully staffing the program.

Strategy Rationale Wraparound Services is a service delivery method with values consistent with objectives necessary to meet this Improvement Goal:

- Family Centered
- Broadens efforts towards restoring family capacity
- Collaborative
- Strengths Based
- "Can Do" attitude

Milestone	5.1.1 Increase Wraparound Services caseload capacity by fully staffing the program.	Timeframe	March, 2008	Assigned to	Crystal Markytan – Program Manager, Social Services Branch Tom Crowell – Assistant Chief, Probation
------------------	--	------------------	-------------	--------------------	--

Strategy 5.2

Implement Family Search and Engagement techniques to find more relative resources for children earlier in the dependency process.

Strategy Rationale

This strategy is employed at the "front end" of the system to aide the social worker/probation officer in asking the question who the child may have available as a placement resource in a broader way than has been done in the past. This is the beginning of the effort for concurrent

			planning. Search techniques learned will enable the social worker and probation officer to contact a larger pool of resources for a specific child/youth. Engagement techniques assist the social worker or probation officer to first establish then maintain a long term committed relationship between the child/youth and the resource. Additionally, this strategy can be used in the “back end” of a case to help find permanent homes for youth who have been in long term foster care placements for lack of a better permanent plan.		
Milestone	5.2.1 Contract with Northern California Training Academy at the University of California at Davis – Center for Family Focused Practice for training and technical support	Timeframe	January, 2008	Assigned to	Crystal Markytan – Program Manager, Social Services Branch Eileen Myster – Probation Supervisor
	5.2.2 Develop protocols and procedures for Family Search and Engagement Techniques		April, 2008		
	5.2.3 Develop protocols and procedures for Family Search and Engagement Techniques		April. 2008		
Strategy 5.3 Twice yearly case reviews with California State Adoptions.			Strategy Rationale Caseload specific and system wide review will provide an opportunity for bi-annual evaluation of collaborative services.		
Milestone	5.3.1 Schedule review date with California State Adoptions case manager	Timeframe	February, 2008	Assigned to	Julie Cain – Ongoing Supervisor Crystal Markytan – Program Manager, Social Services Branch
	5.3.2 Review cases that have been referred for adoptions assessments and cases that are in the adoptions process.		February, 2008		
	5.3.3 Define any systemic problems that are apparent as a result of the review and make a plan to address them		February, 2008		
Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.					
None at this time.					

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.
Training and technical assistance through Northern California Training Academy at the University of California at Davis.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
Child Welfare Services will collaborate with the Probation Department with Wraparound Services and Family Search and Engagement training and implementation.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.
None at this time.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:		
2C Timely Social Worker Visits: This measure computes the percentage of children who received a monthly visit, out of all those children for whom a visit was required. Children for whom a determination is made that monthly visits are not necessary (e.g. valid visit exception) are not included in this measure.		
County's Current Performance:		
Review of the Data:		
Of clients for whom a monthly visit is required, what percentage received a timely visit from their social worker?		
National Goal or Standard	Del Norte County Baseline/Oct. 2004	Del Norte County/Oct. 2007
Month 1 NA	74.5%	76.1%
Month 2 NA	72.0%	84.6%
Month 3 NA	78.8%	88.5%
Improvement Goal 6.0		
The improvement goal is for 98% of social worker visits to be consistently timely by January 2010.		
Strategy 6.1	Strategy Rationale	
Use Safe Measures case management tool to determine which children are not being seen timely.	Social Workers are able to run monthly reports to identify the children where visit exceptions apply, where have already made a visit and where they have not.	

	6.1.1 Use Safe Measures to determine which children are not being seen timely.		January, 2008		Social Workers and Probation Officers responsible for case management
	6.1.2 Supervisors run Safe Measures reports identifying which children have not had a monthly contact		January, 2008		Julie Cain, Ongoing Unit Supervisor Susan Wilson, Intake Unit Supervisor Eileen Myster, Probation Supervisor
	6.1.3 Staff cases that continue to not receive a timely monthly visit for more that two consecutive months.		April, 2008		Julie Cain Susan Wilson Eileen Myster
Strategy 6.2 Determine all cases meeting the criteria for visit exceptions and file the proper paperwork in the hard copy file; follow up by making the correct data entry into CWS/CMS.			Strategy Rationale Cases meeting the criteria for visit exceptions will not be counted against the total count.		
Milestone	6.2.1 Develop a protocol around visit exceptions using ACIN: 1-34-07 as a guide.	Timeframe	April, 2008	Assigned to	Social Services Analyst
	6.2.2 Train and implement the protocol for visit exceptions.		May, 2008		Social Services Analyst Julie Cain, Ongoing Supervisor Susan Wilson, Intake Supervisor Eileen Myster, Probation Supervisor
	6.2.3 Monitor results of visit exception protocol using “Safe Measures” case management tool.		May, 2008		Social Services Analyst
Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals. Out of county courtesy supervision agreements in those cases where monthly contacts are logistically difficult.					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Ongoing training will include information consistent with ACIN 1-34-07 to ensure that all social workers know the instructions for properly coding					

visits and visit exceptions in CWS/CMS.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

While the Probation Department does not currently have a method of electronically tracking their placements, they would like to obtain funding for a system that would enable them to do so. Visits and visit exceptions are one example of services that could be improved if they could be tracked in a more systematic way.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

None at this time.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:

8A Transitional Age Youth: For each youth in placement, 15 ½ and not yet 16 years of age, the social worker/probation officer of the county of jurisdiction shall insure that the youth shall actively participate in the development of the Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP). The TILP describes the youth's current level of functioning; emancipation goals identified in California Department of Social Services Manual of Policy and Procedure, Section 31-2136.6; the progress towards achieving the TILP goals; the programs and services needed, including, but not limited to, those provided by the ILP; and identifies the individuals assisting the youth. The TILP shall be reviewed, updated, approved, and signed by the social worker/probation officer and the youth every six months. The youth shall be informed of the county Independent Living Program (ILP) and encouraged to participate.

County's Current Performance:

Review of the Data: Participation categories are not mutually exclusive. Youth participation ranges in age from 16-21 and includes both those who participated in ILP services as Child Welfare Services dependents and as Probation wards.

	Baseline October 2004	October 2007
High School Diploma	40	33
Enrolled in College/Higher Education	6	16
Received ILP services	65	59
Completed Vocational Training	0	3
Employed or Other Means of Support	13	37

***No National Standard available**

Improvement Goal 7.0

Increase level of participation in ILP services to all those eligible as Child Welfare dependents and Probation wards.

Strategy 7.1

Strategy Rationale

Expand ILP services to youth exiting the Child Welfare and Probation systems in guardianships, Kin-Gap care and Adoption.			These youth are not currently eligible to services however they would benefit from the opportunity to participate. Many youth who are in relative home care may be in the home of an elderly grandparent or a working relative. This is a prevention based activity in that it prepares the youth to become a productive member of society and educates them from coming back into the CWS system as a parent.		
Milestone	7.1.1 Campaign to the legislature to change current regulations which exclude youth who exit the system through guardianship, Kin-Gap, and Adoption from participating in ILP services	Timeframe	January, 2008	Assigned to	Cookie Estes – ILP Coordinator Crystal Markytan – Program Manager, Social Services Branch Eileen Myster – Probation Supervisor
	7.1.2 Examine the feasibility of using SB 163 funds to serve this population		June, 2008		
	7.1.3 Develop a protocol for serving this population		Contingent on funding		

Strategy 7.2 Continue ILP services to youth within the CalWORKs population between the ages of 16 and 18.		Strategy Rationale Del Norte County has a 19% poverty rate with 7.9% of the population receiving CalWORKs benefits. By introducing youth to the concept of Independent Living Skills, work ethic, and employment planning and the application process for grants and loans for post-secondary learning, there is the possibility of breaking the generational cycle of poverty and entry into the Child Welfare system as a result of parental neglect.			
Milestone	7.2.1 Provide the ILP Services to the youth of current CalWORKs recipients.	Timeframe	Ongoing since 2006	Assigned to	Carmen Chavez – Public Assistance and Training Program Manager
Strategy 7.3 Increase the number of ILP participants entering the Transitional Housing Placement Program.		Strategy Rationale Youth participating in the Independent Living Program, coming directly from foster care placement, and a minimum of 16 years of age are eligible for the Transitional Living Program until they graduate from high school. The program encourages the development of skills needed for			

				independence.	
Milestone	7.3.1 Form a workgroup with Remi Vista Inc. to review the current policies and procedures to ensure that participants are supported in a way that is consistent with the way that a family would support a child/youth.	Timeframe	October, 2007	Assigned to	Cookie Estes – ILP Coordinator Remi Vista THPP Coordinator
	7.3.2 Make recommendations for modifications to policies and procedures		January, 2008		
	7.3.3 Implement changes		March, 2008		
Strategy 7.4 Implement and fully utilize the Transitional Housing Plus Program for emancipated adults.			Strategy Rationale This program started in Del Norte County in December, 2007. Those eligible are dependents or wards having aged out of the Child Welfare Services or Probation system at age 18. They may contact the Independent Living Coordinator in any county with a THP-Plus Program and request services between ages 19 and 24. They are eligible for 24 months of supportive services and rental subsidies. Remi Vista Inc. provides the service in Del Norte County.		
Milestone	7.4.1 Work with Remi Vista Inc. to refer those adults who are eligible based on exit records from Child Welfare Services and Probation	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Cookie Estes - ILP Coordinator Eileen Myster – Probation Supervisor
Strategy 7.5 Coordinate services with the Mental Health Services Act program coordinator for Transitional Age Youth.			Strategy Rationale Maximize services for common target population		
Milestone	7.5.1 Form workgroup to discuss coordinated services for Independent Living Population and Transitional Age Youth	Timeframe	January, 2008	Assigned to	Crystal Markytan – Program Manager, Social Services Branch Cookie Estes – ILP Coordinator Mental Health Services Act Coordinator Eileen Myster – Probation Supervisor Cindy Salatnay – Social Worker II

	7.5.2 Make recommendations to the director		April, 2008		
	7.5.3 Develop a work plan		May, 2008		

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

There is a strong commitment at the Del Norte County Department of Health and Human Services to the population of transitional age youth as evidenced by a commitment to create coordinated services for the Transitional Age Youth and the Independent Living population. The Department of Social Services was recently integrated with the Mental Health Services Branch and administration has now opted to integrate services in a way that can optimally serve clients from both Branches. Many of these youth are already being served concurrently. CalWORKs has been serving the population aged 16-18 for over two years with ILP services.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

Child Welfare Services has been able to share their expertise in providing Independent Living Services with the CalWORKs population. This has been a successful partnership.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

Remi Vista Inc. has contracted with the Del Norte County Department of Health and Human Services to provide both the Transitional Housing Placement Program and the Transitional Housing Plus Program.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

Legislative changes should be made so that there is not a penalty for positive outcomes for children when exiting out of home placement. Currently, if a child exits foster care in a plan of Adoption, Kin-Gap or Guardianship they are not eligible for Independent Living Program services. Furthermore, if they exit prior to their 18th birthday, they are not eligible to the Transitional Housing Plus Program at any time. Children who have experienced out of home care during their lives often experience further instability in their lives including possible disruption of a "permanent" placement. As former dependents and wards these youth and young adults should have an additional option available to them. To not make programs such as these available to them is legislatively short sighted.

